

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An accounting management apparatus that manages accounting with respect to image formation by an image formation device, which uses a recording agent from a recording agent cartridge having a storage element to form an image including letters and characters on a medium like paper, said accounting management apparatus comprising:

an information acquisition module that acquires accounting information which is stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge, the accounting information including cartridge information with regard to said recording agent cartridge and image formation information with regard to image formation carried out by said image formation device with the recording agent from said recording agent cartridge; and

a charge computation module that computes a charge, based on the acquired cartridge information and image formation information.

20 2. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 1, wherein the cartridge information includes reuse information regarding reuse of a main body and components of said recording agent cartridge, and

said charge computation module computes the charge, based
on the reuse information.

3. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with
5 claim 2, wherein said charge computation module computes the
charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase
in frequency of reuse with regard to the main body of said
recording agent cartridge.

10 4. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with
claim 2, wherein said charge computation module computes the
charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase
in number of reused components among all the components of said
recording agent cartridge.

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 5. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with
claim 1, wherein the image formation information includes a
numerical quantity of image formation, and
 said charge computation module computes the charge in such
20 a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in numerical
quantity of image formation.

6. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with

claim 1, wherein said information acquisition module acquires the image formation information from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge.

5 7. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with claim 6, said accounting management apparatus further comprising:

a connector module that is connectable with the storage element of said recording agent cartridge,

10 wherein said information acquisition module acquires information used for accounting from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge connecting with said connector module.

8. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with
15 claim 1, wherein said information acquisition module acquires the cartridge information and the image formation information, which are stored in the storage element of said recording agent cartridge attached to said image formation device, from said image formation device connecting with said accounting
20 management apparatus via a communication line.

9. An accounting management apparatus in accordance with
claim 8, wherein multiple recording agent cartridges are attached

to said image formation device, and
said charge computation module computes the charge, based
on multiple pieces of the cartridge information acquired from
respective storage elements of said multiple recording agent
5 cartridges attached to said image formation device.

10. An accounting process method that manages accounting
with respect to image formation by an image formation device,
which uses a recording agent from a recording agent cartridge
10 having a storage element to form an image including letters and
characters on a medium like paper, said accounting process method
comprising the steps of:

(a) acquiring accounting information, the accounting
information including cartridge information with regard to said
15 recording agent cartridge, which is stored in the storage element
of said recording agent cartridge, and image formation
information with regard to image formation carried out by said
image formation device with the recording agent from said
recording agent cartridge; and

20 (b) computing a charge, based on the acquired cartridge
information and image formation information.

11. An accounting process method in accordance with claim

10, wherein the cartridge information includes reuse information regarding reuse of a main body and components of said recording agent cartridge, and

5 said step(b) computes the charge, based on the reuse information.

12. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 11, wherein said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in frequency of reuse 10 with regard to the main body of said recording agent cartridge.

13. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 11, wherein said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in number of reused 15 components among all the components of said recording agent cartridge.

14. An accounting process method in accordance with claim 10, wherein the image formation information includes a numerical 20 quantity of image formation, and

 said step(b) computes the charge in such a manner as to lower the charge with an increase in numerical quantity of image formation.

15. An accounting process method in accordance with claim
10, wherein said step(a) acquires the image formation information
from the storage element of said recording agent cartridge.

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16. An accounting process method in accordance with claim
10, wherein said step(a) acquires the cartridge information and
the image formation information, which are stored in the storage
element of said recording agent cartridge attached to said image
formation device, from said image formation device connecting
with said accounting management apparatus via a communication
line.

17. An accounting process method in accordance with claim
15 16, wherein multiple recording agent cartridges are attached to
said image formation device, and
said step(b) computes the charge, based on multiple pieces
of the cartridge information acquired from respective storage
elements of said multiple recording agent cartridges attached
20 to said image formation device.